

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of July 8, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Rob Lewis, Acting Clerk Ken McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Peter G. DeMasi (Highway Superintendent), James Baraw (Ambulance Supervisor), Lawton Rutter (Lost Nation ATV Club), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.

- IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None.

- V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

- a. Highway Superintendent Peter G. DeMasi.** Mr. DeMasi summarized his written report to the Board. He noted that the Highway Department currently is understaffed by two (2) employees: one is out on disability and the other took a job with the Barre Town Highway Department. A temporary employee has been hired to assist with some (but not all) of the duties performed by the employee on disability. Over the past couple weeks brush was cut back on Messier Hill Road, and this greatly increased the visibility for residents pulling out of their driveways. A new culvert, comprised of a new style of plastic, was installed as an emergency measure on Morning Star Lane. As a result of consulting with Patrick Ross of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (Environmental Conservation), Mr. DeMasi stated that the new culvert to be installed on Smith Hill Road will be an open bottom arch culvert (instead of a box culvert as originally envisioned). He will go out to bid on this project soon. In his report, Mr. DeMasi also provided a list of the roads that had roadside mowing during the past month as well as the roads that had excavator work or were graded. He added that many hours were put on the excavator this past week due to the local flooding. Mr. DeMasi concluded his report summary by stating that the paving that had been planned for FY 2012/2013 has been completed and we now have bid proposals in hand for the FY 2013/2014 paving (see below).

Manager Lewis stated that because of numerous complaints received this past week regarding the condition of West Hill Road, he took a ride with Mr. DeMasi today. He stated that they were able to traverse its length at thirty-five miles per hour (35 MPH) without any problems. Selectman Goslant asked if the West Hill Road Bridge was posted. Mr. DeMasi said that it was not; it can handle up to sixty thousand (60,000) pounds.

Mr. DeMasi said that the recent heavy rains resulted in high water levels for the Dog River, Cox Brook, etc. The Fairground Road Bridge and the Bull Run Bridge were inspected for flood damage by state engineers last Thursday (07/04/13). The Fairground Road Bridge was temporarily closed. The Bull Run Bridge was compromised by a damaged abutment that was rebuilt Thursday morning. Because this happened on the Independence Day holiday, material had to be obtained from the Agency of Transportation (AOT) District 6 rather than from a private contractor.

Wheeler Road and Forest Road were rebuilt today as was Turkey Hill Road at its intersection with Forest Road. In addition, some of the backroads suffered washouts when private driveways diverted large amounts of water onto them. Mr. DeMasi has kept in contact with AOT District 6 and should learn tomorrow whether FEMA will help out.

Manager Lewis added that FEMA and Vermont Emergency Management will be in Washington County tomorrow to inspect the flood damage. Roxbury was especially hard hit by the recent storms. Manager Lewis stated that he returned to Northfield during the long holiday weekend to view the local damage and to provide authorization for the emergency purchase of two (2) culverts for Hockman Hill Road and Dole Hill Road. Mr. DeMasi thanked all the emergency service responders who helped out during the worst of the flooding. Chair Quinn added thanks to the Highway Department operators (and Town Manager Lewis).

Selectman Gadbois asked why gravel wasn't hauled out of Tucker's pit during the emergency. Manager Lewis stated that we prefer to use the plant mix available from Pike Industries. Mr. DeMasi added that it also was less expensive.

Selectman Bradley asked if the Town could address the problem of driveway stormwater runoff damaging the roads. Manager Lewis has looked at the Town of Groton driveway ordinance as a model. A formal ordinance would be much more enforceable than the policy Northfield currently has. He will forward a recommendation to the Board soon. Selectman Goslant believes that this should be expedited as all Northfield taxpayers are bearing the costs.

Selectman Goslant stated that there is a serious dip in the road on Union Brook; is this being addressed? Manager Lewis replied that he spoke to AOT District 6 about this last year. He learned that a long-term fix would be very expensive. Mr. DeMasi stated that he plans to apply for a hazard mitigation grant to address this problem. Selectman Goslant noted that there is a lot of stormwater flooding in this area, which includes Vine Street Extension. Mr. DeMasi noted that the flooding is occurring on private property so there is not much that the Town can do. He also confirmed that Town drainage is not causing this problem. Selectman Bradley added that since this is a Village street, this remains the Village's problem until merger goes into effect.

Selectman Goslant asked if there was anything that the Town could do about the structure on Water Street that is threatening to fall into the Dog River. Chair Quinn said that the Town could do nothing until the FEMA buyout process is complete and the Town owns it. Selectman Goslant was concerned that the building might fall into the river before then and cause serious problems.

Selectman Goslant wanted to know why the Town purchased winter sand at this time of year. Manager Lewis stated that there was an opportunity to purchase five hundred (500) yards at FY 2012/2013 prices. Mr. DeMasi added that winter sand delivered during the winter has to thaw out before it is usable.

Manager Lewis stated that the new excavator has not been employed in road ditching this summer as much as had been anticipated due to the aforementioned lack of manpower. The constant rain also hasn't helped much. Selectman Bradley noted that the cost analysis done before the excavator's purchase showed that if it is used for four hundred (400) hours each year, there are considerable cost savings over leasing comparable equipment.

Selectman Gadbois noted that in the listings of when the Highway Department was performing roadside mowing, grading, etc., there were days that had nothing indicated; what were the Highway employees doing on those days? Mr. DeMasi stated that each Highway employee fills out a daily worksheet that documents what he does each workday; would the Board members like copies of these worksheets? Selectman Denny did not believe the Board members need this level of detail. Selectman Goslant believes that the Highway Subcommittee can work with Manager Lewis on this if there are any concerns. Selectman Denny agreed that much of the previous discussion seems like committee work.

- b. Ambulance Supervisor James Baraw.** While Mr. Baraw was absent on a brief callout, there was a short discussion of an item on his written monthly report: the new Siren® Run Reporting System. Selectman Bradley noted that the new billing system was intended to reduce the number of employee hours dedicated to ambulance billing; do we know yet how much time will be saved? Finance Director Laurie Baroffio said that we do not have an exact figure yet. However, because of the anticipated time savings for Accounting Department staff, the Town has decided to hire an additional half-time employee for the department rather than the full-time employee as originally planned.

Upon his return, Mr. Baraw summarized his written report for the Board members. This included going out to bid for a new ambulance unit; new statewide training protocols; the previously discussed Siren® Run Reporting System; the success of Safety Day 2013; staffing concerns mainly caused by the end of the Norwich University school year; the possibility of recruiting additional year-round Northfield residents to serve on the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS); his attempts to expand NAS size and revenues (as Selectman Denny had suggested); that Ambulance Unit One underwent some body work (that was covered under the warranty); that Ambulance Unit Two, which will be replaced soon, is holding up for the time being; etc. He added that Northfield EMT Mark Podgwaite, who also heads Lyndon Rescue, was able to lend Northfield a Lyndon rescue truck over the holiday weekend while Unit One was being repaired. In addition, Northfield police officers responded to an emergency call at Mayo Healthcare when the primary NAS crew was occupied. They performed CPR and the patient has a good chance of recovery because of their efforts.

As Emergency Management Director (EMD), Mr. Baraw noted that Central Vermont will remain under a flood watch for the next week or so. He has been documenting local flood damage and will forward this information to the state. He also is keeping an eye at the flood gauge installed on Cox Brook. Mr. Baraw added that a lot of valuable lessons were learned from the Tropical Storm Irene experience.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. June 24, 2013 (Joint Board Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to approve the minutes. Selectman Denny wants it clarified that the \$110,258.45 collected during the recent tax sale was recovered delinquent taxes and not the total sale price of the twelve (12) structures that sold. **Motion to approve amended minutes passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #02-14.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #02-14 in the amount of \$112,157.09. Selectman Bradley asked if it were possible to have energy audits performed on some municipal facilities. He felt that the Police Station and Town Garage seemed to consume an abnormally high amount of electricity each month. Manager Lewis stated that it might be possible to obtain grant monies to do this. Ms. Baroffio confirmed that grant monies were used for the fairly recent energy audits of the Brown Public Library and Fire Station. Manager Lewis stated that energy efficiency was one of his top priorities and this will be addressed. Selectman Bradley saw a number of invoices for animal control. Manager Lewis stated that the contract with the new Animal Control Officer requires that he invoice the Town for each dog collection, etc. Selectman Bradley is concerned about the consistency and cost of the lighting at the Town cemeteries. Manager Lewis stated that he is looking into the installation of solar-powered LED fixtures. Selectman Gadbois noted a NAS cell phone charge of \$797.49. Mr. Baraw stated that local businessman Barry Chouinard has pledged to reimburse this amount as his most recent donation to the NAS. Selectman Bradley felt that this was very generous of him. Mr. Baraw confirmed that Mr. Chouinard has been very supportive of the Northfield emergency services over the years. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through June 23, 2013.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$56,254.24. Selectman Bradley noted that Police Department overtime charges have returned after being absent for a couple months. Manager Lewis will check into this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of Resolution to Expand All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Use.** Manager Lewis received a request in May 2013 from Lawton Rutter of the Lost Nation ATV Club to revise the current Northfield ATV Ordinance so that their trail system could be expanded into South Northfield for this summer and early fall. Manager Lewis felt that following the normal procedures for ordinance revision (such as public hearings, public notifications, etc.) would severely cut into this requested timeline. He further researched this matter with the assistance of the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) and learned that the Select Board could adopt a resolution that would allow for the temporary expansion of the trail system as a prelude to a formal ordinance revision. The main difference between this resolution and an ordinance would be that the Lost Nation ATV Club would be responsible for enforcing its provisions. Motion by Selectman Quinn, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the resolution, which would be in effect from July 9, 2013 through October 31, 2013. Chair Quinn noted that the proposed resolution indicates which portions of which roads would be open to ATV operation. The Board had requested that this information be incorporated into any new resolution and/or ordinance. Selectman Bradley noted that the resolution specifies that it would be in effect until the end of October; could the Select Board rescind the resolution before then if problems develop? Manager Lewis confirmed this was possible. Selectman Goslant asked Manager Lewis if he had contacted the Police Chief and Highway Superintendent for their views. Manager Lewis confirmed that he had and there had been no objections. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Mr. Rutter thanked Manager Lewis and the Select Board members for their support. The trail signage will be going up as soon as possible even though the recent storms damaged some trails in Roxbury. Selectman Bradley asked if there was a map of the current trail system. Mr. Rutter stated that there was and he would forward some copies. Selectman Denny asked if hikers also can use the trail system. Mr. Rutter said that there is no prohibition. In fact, some people walk their dogs along the trail.
- b. **Waiver of Northfield Historical Society's Annual Heating Contribution.** Manager Lewis stated that the Northfield Historical Society (NHS) is especially cash-strapped this year and has requested that its annual payment of \$1500 to the Town to partially offset Paine House heating expenses be waived. He added that NHS made this payment for the past three (3) years. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to waive the NHS payment for the fiscal year just concluded (2012/2013). Selectman Bradley stated that the Working Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding jointly signed by the Town of Northfield, Brown Public Library (BPL), and NHS in 2004 specifies their respective responsibilities. It clearly states that the Town is responsible for all utility payments. NHS paid the \$1500 in recent years even though it was not required to do so. Since its annual budget is about \$8500, Selectman Bradley feels that the NHS has better uses for its limited funds. He believes that the payment should be permanently eliminated. Although she has nothing in writing to confirm this, Ms. Baroffio believes that the NHS made this annual payment to the BPL when the Paine House was BPL property. When the BPL (and Paine House) became Town property, the payment then went to the Town. Chair Quinn does not oppose waiving this payment for this past year but would like the Working Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding revisited before any decision is made regarding future years. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. Approval of FY 2013/2014 Town Tax Rates.** In the packets was a memorandum from Finance Director Baroffio stating that since the Accounting Department will be adding a half-time rather than full-time employee this coming year, there is an option to reduce the tax levy approved at Town Meeting Day (03/05/13) by \$11,380 in the Town General and \$4,910 in the combined Highway budgets. If the Select Board decides on this option (as Manager Lewis recommends), the proposed Town tax rates would decrease by about \$0.006. Ms. Baroffio confirmed with Attorney Paul Giuliani that the Board can take this action without additional voter authorization because this is a tax levy decrease and not an increase (i.e., "no harm, no foul"). She added that the FY 2013/2014 tax bills will be mailed out next week in order to meet the thirty (30) day notification period before the first payment is due on August 16, 2013. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Quinn, to approve the revised FY 2013/2014 Town tax rates of \$2.6357 (Homestead) and \$2.7544 (Non-Residential). **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. Approval of Sand & Gravel Bid Award.** In his memorandum, Mr. DeMasi recommended that the Town award the winter sand (delivered) bid to Gross Trucking & Excavating (\$11.00 per yard) and the crushed gravel bid to Pike Industries (\$8.49 per yard loaded and \$18.77 per yard delivered). Chair Quinn noted that while RE Tucker, Inc. had submitted a \$10.00 per yard bid proposal for winter sand, this price did not include delivery (as the specifications required). Mr. DeMasi confirmed that the cost of sending an employee with vehicle to pick up the sand would be cost prohibitive. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to award the winter sand bid to Gross Trucking & Excavating. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to award the crushed gravel (i.e., "plant mix") bid to Pike Industries. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. Approval of Highway Paving Bid Award.** Mr. DeMasi recommends awarding the highway paving bid to the low bidder, Pike Industries, at \$82.45 per ton. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to award the highway paving bid to Pike Industries. Selectman Gadbois asked if this price included road grinding. Mr. DeMasi confirmed that this would be a separate expense for the Village. He added that the Town streets to be paved this year are Preston Drive, Winch View Drive, and either Terrace Drive or the Town's portion of Crescent Avenue. Selectman Goslant believes that paving of Terrace Drive has been delayed for a couple years. Mr. DeMasi agreed that it is a close call between the two. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- f. Joint Board Meeting.** The Town Selectmen and Village Trustees will hold their next joint meeting on Tuesday, July 23, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.
- g. Status Reports: Various Projects.**
- 1. Highway Subcommittee.** Selectman Gadbois recently sent the report on the subcommittee's last meeting. Selectman Bradley had been grateful to receive it.
 - 2. Merger Transition Committee.** Selectman Denny reported that the committee will hold its next meeting tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. The main topics to be discussed will be the role of the Municipal Manager in the consolidated municipality and the functions and responsibilities of the new utility commissioners.
- IX. MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Lewis had provided the Board with a written report and asked if the Board members had any questions.
- a. New Municipal Pool Mats.** Chair Quinn asked where the new mats were put. Manager Lewis stated that there is a slope in the pool as it transitions from the shallow to deep end. The mats were put there to avoid a tripping hazard. Selectman Gadbois saw them over the weekend and they work very well.
- b. Energy Efficiency.** Selectman Gadbois asked if the Town was able to purchase and use waste oil in order to cut down on heating costs. Manager Lewis will check into this.
- X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items.** There was none.
- XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Lewis present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Quinn, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 10:35 p.m. No action was taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Quinn, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.